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Winnipeg metro

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metroVIEWS

Jets have traded forward and captain Andrew Ladd to Chicago in a multi-player deal for Mark Dano. TREVOR HAGAN/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

'Growing, thriving'

STATE OF THE CITY

Bowman says Winnipeg could become a tech hub

Braeden Jones
Metro | Winnipeg

An enthusiastic Mayor Brian Bowman called his city "growing, thriving, and diverse" in his second state-of-the-city address, Thursday.

The crowd of more than 1,000 in the newest part of the convention centre for the annual Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce luncheon heard him lay out a plan to push towards "the Winnipeg we want in the future."

"Together, over the last year, we've been building a tremendous amount of momentum," Bowman said.

He said residential development downtown, "unprecedented investment in road renewal," more open data and other more recent successes like progress made on True North Square were a part of that momentum.

Absent from the official announcement of the plans for True North Square Wednesday, Bowman said Thursday he feels it "has the potential to be transformative."

Looking to the future, the mayor made several announcements. In the next year, he plans to travel the country "and showcase our city as a place to live, work, and invest."

He also stated he "(continues) to support the removal of pedestrian barriers at Portage and Main ... a key step to making downtown accessible and engaging."

Transforming the Exchange District into a startup hub was among the promises Bowman underlined for 2017.

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

French court OKs razing of makeshift migrant camp in Calais. **World**

PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING

Structure should be bulldozed: Mayor

Winnipeg's Mayor Brian Bowman didn't mince words Thursday when he announced his full support for demolishing the existing Public Safety building (PSB).

"We need to decide what we're going to do with the space, and bulldozing it is what I want to see," Bowman said.

All staff will have vacated the aged building by July, when the move to the new Winnipeg Police Headquarters in the old Canada Post building on Graham is expected to be complete. Bowman said that generally, he's "a strong proponent of heritage (and) preservation in our downtown."

"Unfortunately that just is not going to be a good use of our funds... my understanding is it is not structurally sound," he said.

Nearby, the brutalism of the PSB — built in 1966 — is reflected in the modernist architecture of City Hall, built in 1964.

"That space (city hall) is being used," he said. Whereas the PSB is "beyond repair."

MICHELLE BAILEY/FOR METRO

Public Safety Building. METRO

REAL ESTATE

Bowman considers new property fees

Braeden Jones
Metro | Winnipeg

Property costs in Winnipeg's new developments may rise with the addition of growth fees potentially looming on the horizon.

"Growth fees are one way to ensure growth pays for growth," said Mayor Brian Bowman at the annual state-of-the-city address. "They're a way to reflect the full cost of growth, and its impact on city-wide public infrastructure... a way for us to grow smart."

He announced that the city is currently studying how it could benefit from adding "growth fees," and added "in the coming months (will) be further engaging" with industry experts and stakeholders on the topic.

Pressed for more information, Bowman was unable to tell reporters exactly how a growth fee might manifest in Winnipeg, but he did say it's something that has been beneficial "for just about every other major municipality in Canada."

The Great Ice Show at the Forks on Jan. 25. DAVID LIPNOWSKI/FOR METRO

Great Ice Show cool until March

COSTS

Organizers hoping winter lingers a few weeks longer

Michelle Bailey
For Metro

Paul Kostas is crossing his fingers temperatures in Winnipeg stay in the below normal range for just a few more weeks.

Kostas, one of the organizers of The Great Ice Show at The Forks, says that would allow the attraction to stay open until at least mid-March. "I know people are ready for spring, but we hope winter hangs on a bit longer," Kostas said Friday.

The attraction made its debut in the city Jan. 25. Created by 50 sculptors from China, it features life-sized snow, ice and light sculptures, toboggan slopes, sleigh rides and igloos.

Organizers were originally looking at shutting down by end of February, but Kostas said they are trying to stretch it out as long as the weather cooperates, as they still need to cover their costs. He wouldn't say, however, how many people have visited the site.

"This was funded with private money to the tune of about $250,000, which includes the cost of bringing the sculptors here from China," he said.

"I know people were initially unhappy about the [$20] fees, but it's no different than what it costs to access attractions of this calibre in other cities, in fact they charge even more."

Kostas added that having more local sculptors help bring the various ice creations to life would have helped reduce costs, but said that was not an option.

Despite the admission charge, he said the public response has been outstanding and they fully intend to bring this ice show back next year.

"The theme will be entirely different, just to keep it fresh."

ROADS

Lac du Bonnet woman killed in head-on collision

A woman has been killed in a two-vehicle head-on crash in southern Manitoba. RCMP say two vans collided Wednesday night on Highway 3 near the community of Sperling, southwest of Winnipeg.

They say the victim — a 26-year-old resident of Lac du Bonnet, Man., — was driving one of the vehicles. She died at the scene while a man who was driving the other van suffered non-life-threatening injuries.

A young male passenger in the second vehicle has minor injuries.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Women charged after stolen vehicle stuck in snowbank: Police

Winnipeg police have charged two women in connection to a stolen vehicle that led officers on a recent chase.

Police said officers spotted a stolen Chevrolet Cruze with several female passengers in the vehicle in the area of Gateway Road and Kimberley Avenue on Wednesday around 2 a.m. According to a news release, police said the driver tried to get away from police, but the vehicle ended up stuck in a snowbank around the 600 block of Golspie Street.

The passengers then attempted to run away but were tracked down by the K-9 unit police said. METRO

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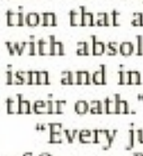
CRIME

Judge handed down decision in court on Thursday



Braeden Jones
Metro | Winnipeg

The man accused of sending bombs to law offices in Winnipeg will not be granted an out-of-province judge.

"Put starkly, in this case, there is no cogent evidence establishing a real likelihood of bias that would justify calling into question the integrity of the entire court and the administration of justice," said Chief Justice Glenn Joyal in Wednesday's ruling.

Guido Amsel, 49, is charged with a litany of weapons and explosives charges along with three counts of attempted murder and one count of aggravated assault.

His lawyer, Martin Glazer, requested an out-of-province judge on Monday—citing potential bias in the justice given the "exceptional circumstances" of the case, including the fact that the main victim is a member of the Law Society of Manitoba.

Joyal said "that fact alone does not displace the presumption that all judges will act with absolute professionalism and in compliance with their oath."

"Every judge of the Court of Queens Bench has taken an oath to faithfully exercise the powers and trust placed upon them as a justice," he said.

Guido Amsel, charged with three counts of attempted murder, was denied a request to be tried by an out-of-province judge Thursday. Inset: Alleged victim Maria Mitousis. THE CANADIAN PRESS/ HANDOUT; INSET: LINKEDIN

"It cannot be said that a justice of this court or any court falls into an automatic position of apprehended bias simply because there are victims and witnesses that are members of the legal profession."

Amsel's case will return to court for a bail review on Mar. 21.

He was initially denied bail last September.

> **There is no cogent evidence establishing a real likelihood of bias.** Chief Justice Glenn Joyal

It's alleged that Amsel was targeting his former wife and the lawyers who were involved in a lengthy legal dispute between the couple.

Three bombs were sent in July, 2015. One to an auto repair shop where Amsel's ex-wife worked and to the lawyers who had represented Amsel and his wife in their divorce.

Two were safely disposed of but one exploded at the office of Petersen-King on River Avenue, severely injuring lawyer Maria Mitousis.

Mitousis lost her right hand and suffered injuries to her face and other parts of her body.

TIMELINE

July 3, 2015: Explosive package delivered to law office of Petersen King on River Avenue. Lawyer Maria Mitousis is seriously injured.

July 5, 2015: Guido Amsel, 49, is charged, after police find a second explosive at an auto-repair shop and third at law office of Ore Barkman and Davidson over the weekend. Amsel is charged with explosives-related offenses, one count of aggravated assault and two counts of attempted murder, later three.

July 23, 2015: Criminal lawyer Martin Glazer says Amsel intends to enter a plea of not guilty. It was speculated Amsel had difficulty finding a lawyer.

August 27, September 2, 2015: Bail hearing held for Amsel, which is subject to a publication ban.

Sept. 9, 2015: Manitoba judge denies Amsel bail, Glazer says Crown only has "circumstantial evidence."

February, 22, 2016: Glazer requests an out-of-province judge, citing any local judge could be biased.

February, 25, 2016: Chief Justice Chief Glenn Joyal denies request, rules lack of evidence to prove likelihood of a bias.

March. 21: Amsel's next bail review.

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Murder victim remembered

MEMORIAL

Candles, drums mark city's fifth murder of 2016

Michelle Bailey
For Metro | Winnipeg

Winnipeg's latest homicide victim was memorialized in a vigil Thursday evening.

A few dozen gathered by candlelight to remember Marilyn Rose Munroe as a mother, an active member of her community and a good friend.

"Her and I knew each other for a long time" said a woman named Carrie, as she walked around offering to smudge participants as they gathered in front of 298 Pritchard Avenue to honour the mother of four.

"She was such a good person who didn't deserve this."

The body of the 41-year-old was discovered inside the Pritchard Avenue home on Monday.

Winnipeg Police are treating her death as a homicide, but have yet to indicate how she died.

5

Police say there have been five homicides in Winnipeg in 2016.

The candlelight vigil was organized by Cheryl James who was a friend of Munroe's. Members of the Bear Clan Patrol and drummers took part in the vigil.

James and several others came to the vigil after having attended today's meeting at the national roundtable on missing and murdered women and girls being held in Winnipeg this week.

"It's tragic situations like what happened to her that makes it important for us to get together to discuss how we stop the violence and protect our women and our families," James said.

"These vigils allow us to gather as a community and support the family, as well as help others who have experienced loss," she said "But there are too many of them and it has to stop."

Marilyn Rose Munroe was found deceased in one of Winnipeg's North End homes this week. FACEBOOK

A crowd gathers to honour the life of Marilyn Rose Munroe in front of the home where police found her body. DAVID LIPNOWSKI/FOR METRO

> **She was such a good person who didn't deserve this.**
> Carrie, last name withheld

VINCE LI

Permitted to move out of group home

A man who beheaded a fellow passenger on a Greyhound bus in Manitoba has won the right to eventually live on his own.

A Criminal Code Review Board has approved a plan that would allow Vince Li to at some point move out of the group home where he now lives.

Li — who has changed his name to Will Baker — killed Tim McLean during a bus trip along the TransCanada Highway near Portage la Prairie in July 2008.

He was found to be not criminally responsible for the murder due to a mental illness — schizophrenia.

Baker was originally kept in a secure wing at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre, but the board has granted him increasing freedoms almost every year.

The request for more freedom came from Baker's medical team, saying he has been a model patient and understands the need to continue to take anti-psychotic medication.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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HEART AND STROKE

Sponge hockey tourney back for charity

Meg Crane
For Metro | Winnipeg

For the third year in a row, organizers of an outdoor sponge hockey tournament in Winnipeg expect to raise several thousand dollars for the Heart and Stroke Foundation.

"I couldn't be happier that we have 19 full teams registered," organizer Sarah Tone said Friday. The past two years have seen a max 11 teams participate.

Thanks to corporate sponsorship, Kijiji ads and word of mouth, more and more people are becoming aware of the annual tourney, affectionately called Between the Pipes.

Tone expects more than 160 people to show up this weekend.

Along with the increase in players are two divisions — for rec and competitive teams — within the tournament, Tone added.

Tone initially started the fundraiser in 2014 to raise awareness about heart disease, which is an issue close to home. Her dad died when he was just 44 of an undiagnosed genetic heart condition.

The event continues to be brought back every year by popular demand. Tone said people are already inquiring about 2017.

"People just keep asking about it. It was never something I just did for myself, but it certainly has become about participants," said Tone.

She says donating the money raised from the tournament's registration fees to charity rather than handing it out as a cash prize to the winner seems to have struck a cord with players.

Organizer Sarah Tone at last year's tournament. CONTRIBUTED

"There have been a couple sponsors who are new this year, and we've talked quite a bit about how they can be involved next year," Tone added.

The tournament takes place Saturday at the Norwood Community Centre 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

IN BRIEF

NDP accuse Opposition of U.S.-style politicking

The Manitoba government is accusing the Opposition of trying to Americanize the province's political system. Tory Leader Brian Pallister has left the door open to raising the maximum amount people can donate to political parties from $3,000 if he becomes premier. Health Minister Sharon Blady says that would allow wealthy people to influence elections, similar to what is seen in the United States.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Province proposes Truth and Reconciliation actions

The NDP has put forward a bill that would commit the government to act on recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. It says the government must respect and understand aboriginal rights and traditions in its actions.

The government has put forward actions on reconciliation, such as changes that give aboriginals greater control of the child-welfare system.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Join the dance party

PERFORMANCE

The Rhythm wants to make a connection

Meg Crane
For Metro | Winnipeg

NAfro Dance Productions is throwing a party at the Gas Station Arts Centre.

The African contemporary dance company is performing its latest piece, The Rhythm, and the audience needs to come prepared to be part of the show.

"They have to clap, they have to stomp their feet, they have to sing with us. There's some parts where we ask the audience to stand up and dance. It's a big party, normally," said NAfro artistic director Casimiro Nhussi on Friday.

Nhussi said his performances often have a message, but he also wants people to have fun.

"There's no just sitting and just thinking. There's enough thinking. You can think at home. When you come here, we ask you to have a good time," said Nhussi.

He said the art is for and inspired by the audience, so he wants to involve them in the show.

"For us, it's so fulfilling," said Nhussi.

This show, for example, he says was inspired by the movement of the world.

"All this universe is so choreographed, you know? It's so rhythmically crafted," said Nhussi. The rhythm of traffic, the river, everything, is what inspired this piece.

"The theme is that what connects everything," Nhussi said.

Some NAfro pieces take eight weeks to put together, but Nhussi and his crew prepared this one in just four.

"Some, they go faster, because you wake up at midnight and go, 'Oh! This one,' and then you start producing and then you go faster because everything is just coming," he said.

The Rhythm is one of those pieces, despite the fact that it includes the 10-piece NAfro Band, the Papa Mambo band and dancers.

NAfro Dance Productions perform at The Gas Station Arts Centre, this weekend, Feb. 26 to 28.
LEIF NORMAN

ON POINT

Dance with a purpose
NAfro Dance Productions was started in 2002 with a mission to encourage and support African and African-Canadian dancers and choreographers.
METRO

MUSIC

Big Wreck singer tours solo album

Ian Fletcher Thornley, Big Wreck lead singer and guitarist, is venturing on his own musically as a way to get through a tough time.

"Secrets is a divorce record," said Thornley about his first solo album, which came out in October. "I've been through my fair share of difficult times, as anyone has. And this is certainly one of them."

Thornley said he often deals with rough patches by listening to, writing and playing music, but doing so with his divorce was more challenging than usual.

"It was difficult because I don't want to vilify anyone. I don't want to sound like a victim or be complain-y," he said. "It's a touchy thing. But you still, at the same time, want to be as honest as possible."

To Thornley, Secrets is a very Canadian sounding album, recorded in a secluded cottage north of Toronto.

"It's not like I hear a loon in the background," Thornley said.

"There was nothing around, literally. It was just a little a-frame cottage on a tiny, little marshy lake."

Thornley is playing shows across Canada to promote his solo work, and will play The Pyramid on March 4.
MEG CRANE/ FOR METRO

Ian Fletcher Thornley recorded Secrets in a cabin.
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Move to new court delayed

LAW

Judge brings down tough decision on transfer

A dispute over the location of a French-language court is brewing between justices and the province. COLOURBOX.COM

Manitoba's top judges have notified the provincial government that they won't be moving into a new French-language court building in Winnipeg next week because of lagging renovation work.

The chief judges of the appeal court, Queen's Bench and provincial court state in a letter to Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh that the St. Boniface Judicial Centre is inadequate.

Because the new facility isn't ready, French-language court matters will be temporarily moved to the Law Courts Complex in downtown Winnipeg.

Construction on the courtroom is at least two months behind schedule, which Mackintosh says is due to difficulty getting the current tenants out of the premises.

The justice minister admits he's frustrated with the holdup, but he says only some first appearance criminal matters will be temporarily affected, as well as some small claims and civil matters.

The new court facility was made necessary when the city sold the former St. Boniface police station in 2013 after it was declared surplus.

Appeal Court Chief Justice Richard Chartier, Court of Queen's Bench Chief Justice Glenn Joyal, and provincial court Chief Judge Ken Champagne collectively said in Wednesday's letter that the current state of the new space at 100-614 Rue Des Meurons raises questions about "security, privacy and confidentiality."

"The facility in no way resembles a location able or meant to ensure the dignity and decorum associated with judicial proceedings," the judges said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Time for action: Advocate

ROUNDTABLE

Premiers must help missing, murdered women cause

Premiers have long lobbied the federal government to act on missing and murdered indigenous women.

Now the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada says it is time for them to back up their call for action with some money of their own.

Dawn Lavell-Harvard said the roundtable on missing and murdered indigenous women taking place in Winnipeg is a chance for provinces to commit to help vulnerable women rather than wait until a national inquiry on the issue has wrapped up.

"We want to see the provinces and the federal government coming forward with action plans and budgets to back up those action plans," she said Thursday.

"We cannot afford to wait two years for the end of the inquiry when we know many of the things we need to have happening. We need to start taking action now."

Candles light photos of Tina Fontaine and other murdered and missing women on **a memorial table at the 2nd National Roundtable on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls in Winnipeg Thursday.** JOHN WOODS/ THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hundreds of family members, indigenous leaders and the country's top policy makers have gathered for the meeting.

People sat around a large table covered with candles and photos of some of Canada's roughly 1,200 missing and murdered indigenous women. Some wept and hugged while volunteers walked through the room with tissues.

Lavell-Harvard said provinces need to look at how their child-welfare systems, policing practices and corrections facilities affect indigenous women.

> **We cannot afford to wait two years for the end of the inquiry.**
> Dawn Lavell-Harvard

"When our women leave a First Nation looking for a better life, coming into the cities, these are the structures that are discriminating against our women," she said.

"These are the structures that have the opportunity to create safety. In the past, they have been integral in putting our women into unsafe situations."

National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations said premiers drafting their budgets can do their part to improve education, affordable housing, detox and wellness centres.

But he said there needs to be national co-ordination on actions aimed at ending violence.

"This is a tragedy that really has to end," he said.

The roundtable wraps up late Friday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

+ PREMIER

Provinces can unite on issue, argues Selinger

Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger says he'd like to see practical suggestions coming out of a roundtable in Winnipeg on missing and murdered indigenous women.

He says the provinces shouldn't wait for a national inquiry, but should work together to do what they can to address the issue.

He says Manitoba, for one, wants to move forward to support aboriginal families who have lost loved ones and to make communities safer generally. He says that should be the goal of all jurisdictions.

Selinger says he expects the federal government to work with all the provinces because they provide many of the services he is suggesting.

The roundtable began on Wednesday with closed-door sessions for families only and is now into meetings with premiers, ministers, indigenous leaders and families.

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SOCIAL MEDIA

Planet Paws reaches celebrity status

Yvette d'Entremont
Metro | Halifax

In just six days he has reached almost 107 million people on Facebook, enjoyed 23.5 million engagements on his posts and garnered 45,039 new page likes.

He also has acquired "Facebook Mentions" status, something reserved for actors, sports stars and other well-known public figures.

So Dartmouth-based blogger Rodney Habib was thrilled, but not surprised, to learn that he has the largest pet nutrition-related Facebook page in the world.

"On Wednesday someone tried to hack me, and Facebook messaged me and we had a live conversation," Habib recalled.

"The Facebook employee and I chatted and she said 'These guys have spent a lot of money trying to shut your page down.' Within that conversation was when I was told, 'You have the largest pet nutrition-related site in the world.'"

Last month Facebook told Habib he had to upgrade his personal page because so many people wanted to connect with him outside of his Planet Paws page.

They congratulated him on the traffic going to his personal page and said he had reached celebrity status.

Habib initially started it as a way to share information about pet health and nutrition after experiencing frustration over food-related issues with his dogs.

Rodney Habib and his dog Sammie. JEFF HARPER/METRO

Feds repeal provisions

CITIZENSHIP

Liberals to make good on election promise

The Liberal government has introduced new legislation to remove barriers to citizenship erected by its Conservatives predecessors while retaining and extending officials' authority to deal with fraud.

The changes, expected to be implemented this year, will provide greater flexibility for applicants trying to meet the requirements for citizenship and help immigrants become full-fledged Canadian citizens sooner, said Immigration Minister John McCallum.

The government will also fulfil a significant campaign promise by repealing the controversial provisions introduced by the Tories last May that allow authorities to take away citizenship from dual citizens for "acts against national interest."

"We are honouring all of the commitments on which we were elected," said McCallum.

"A Canadian is a Canadian is a Canadian. It's not up to the government to revoke citizenship. We want to facilitate the process of people becoming Canadian citizens while retaining program integrity."

Despite the proposed changes, immigration officials still have the power to revoke citizenship if it was obtained by false representation or fraud, while the federal court continues to be able to remove the citizenship of those involved in organized crime, war crimes and crimes against humanities.

However, what matters most to would-be citizens would be the proposed changes to citizenship requirements:

- Repealing the intent to reside provision that raised immigrants' fear that their citizenship could be revoked if they moved outside of Canada.
- Reducing the length of time that someone must be physically present in Canada to qualify for citizenship from four out of six years to three out of five.
- Allowing time in Canada before permanent residency to count toward physical residency requirements, which would benefit refugees and those previously in Canada on study or work permits.
- Amending the age range for language and citizenship knowledge exams, allowing those under 18 or older than 54 to be exempted.

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Back to jail for Bantleman

INDONESIA

High court overturns acquittal of schoolteacher

Foreign Affairs Minister Stephane Dion said the Canadian government "is deeply dismayed and shocked" by an Indonesian Supreme Court decision to overturn the acquittal of Canadian schoolteacher Neil Bantleman.

In its decision, the high court also ordered both Bantleman and an Indonesian teaching assistant to serve 11 years in prison instead of the 10 years they initially received for sexually abusing three young children at a prestigious international school in Jakarta.

Bantleman and Ferdinant Tijong were sentenced in April 2015 but maintained their innocence and filed appeals to the High Court, which acquitted them last August.

Supreme Court spokesman Suhadi said a three-member judge panel handed down its verdict on Wednesday based on the prosecutors' appeal.

"The judge panel concluded that the defendants were proven to have violated the 2007 Child Protection Law," said Suhadi, who uses a single name. "It did not only reinstate the District Court's verdict but also lengthened the sentence to 11 years."

The pair were also ordered to pay a $7,440 fine each or to serve six more months in jail.

Under Indonesian law, both Bantleman and Tijong still could challenge the sentence by filing for judicial review by the Supreme Court if they have new evidence.

"This decision is unjust, given the many grave irregularities throughout the various proceedings in this case and the fact that all evidence presented by the defence has systematically been rejected," Dion said in a statement early Thursday.

Chandra Saptaji, head of the general crime section at the South Jakarta Prosecutors' Office, said they are still looking for Bantleman, who is under a ban to leave the country. "Hopefully, he is co-operative and complying with Indonesia law."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN HAPPIER TIMES: Canadian schoolteacher Neil Bantleman and wife Tracy after his release from Jakarta's Cipinang prison on Aug. 14, 2015. Bantleman has been ordered back to jail after his acquittal was overturned on Feb. 25. ROMEO GACAD/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

APPEAL

What's next

The Indonesian Supreme Court has overturned the acquittal of Neil Bantleman in a decision that has "stunned" the Canadian schoolteacher's family.

What's his next legal step?

Bantleman's brother, Guy, says the family will apply for a judicial review at the Supreme Court. Papang Hidayat, an Indonesia-based researcher with Amnesty International, has said a judicial review can be granted if the defence has new evidence to present. That evidence would be heard by a different panel of Supreme Court judges — usually three — than the ones who heard the case previously.

How about an appeal to the president?

A convicted person can appeal directly to the president of Indonesia for clemency, Hidayat said, "but it's very rare, actually, for ordinary cases like this" for the president to get involved at all. Article 14 of the Indonesian Constitution gives the president the power to grant "clemency and restoration of rights" to prisoners after getting advice from the Supreme Court. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

BIRTHDAYS

Leap-year babies face myriad annoyances

It's rare for Laura Pedersen to celebrate a birthday on the day she was actually born. The only thing less common for her is hassle-free paperwork.

Her status as a leap-year baby ensures that genuine birthday festivities are only possible once every four years. That same Feb. 29 birth date also creates day-to-day hassles that are all too common.

Online application forms insist leap day doesn't exist. Official insurance forms document the wrong birthday. And no matter what administrative process she's trying to tackle, she inevitably faces questions as to whether she was, in fact, born on leap day.

"We got married this past summer ... and when I wrote my birthday down, the commissioner asked me several times: 'You're sure that it's Feb. 29, right?'" Pedersen said.

Skepticism about a Feb. 29 birthday is widespread, according to one organization that was formed in part to combat it.

The Honor Society of Leap Year Day Babies was created in 1997 not only to celebrate the unusual date, but to raise awareness of the challenges associated with it and to advocate for those affected by such hassles.

Co-founder Peter Brouwer will celebrate his 15th leap day birthday in Vancouver this year — he'll be 60, for those who struggle with multiplication. He says inconveniences caused by corporate or technological failure to recognize the day has resulted in serious problems for decades for leapers.

Leapers have experienced everything from webpage shutdowns to halted banking transactions due to the lack of familiarity with the date by authorities. He even recalled a society member who was accused of using a falsified driver's licence because of his date of birth.

The society mounted a few tongue-in-cheek campaigns along with more serious efforts to have companies reappraise their efforts to accommodate leapers.

Brouwer said recent years have seen a decisive shift in leapers' favour. "I think things have really improved," he said. "I have not had a problem entering Feb. 29 anywhere since I can remember."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

LEAPERS FUN FACTS

Ever wondered why we have leap year? Here are a few facts to bring you up to speed:

Why do leap years exist?

Leap year is the reason that seasons occur at the same time each year. According to the Honor Society of Leap Year Day Babies, the Earth takes 365.24 days to make a complete cycle around the sun. Every four years, therefore, the world would be a full day out of sync with the calendar.

How does it work?

According to Irv Bromberg at the University of Toronto, "the Gregorian calendar has a 400-year repeat cycle, in which every year number divisible by four (2016, for example) has a leap day appended to February, except if the year number is divisible by 100, in which case it is a leap year only if the year number is also divisible by 400." For instance, the year 2000 was a leap year, while 1900 was not. Got that?

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A child rides his bicycle in the makeshift camp for migrants near Calais, France. JEROME DELAY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Camp set to be destroyed

FRANCE

State to evict hundreds of refugees from site near Calais

A French court gave the state the green light Thursday to raze makeshift tents and lean-tos used by hundreds of migrants at a sprawling slum in Calais, where many dream of slipping into Britain.

Tamping down fears of a violent confrontation, France's interior minister promised to treat the migrants humanely and not send in bulldozers to evict them.

The camp in the northern port city, known as "the Jungle," has been an embarrassing chapter in Europe's migrant crisis, and France announced this month that its densely populated southern half would be razed. The move prompted rights groups and migrant advocates to sue.

The court in Lille ruled that the makeshift shelters used by the migrants can be destroyed, but that common spaces like places of worship, schools and a library must be left standing.

Calais' prime location, with a major ferry port, Eurotunnel rail system and truck traffic crossing the English Channel, has put it in the crosshairs of the migrant crisis.

Weary travellers come driven by a dream that they will find peace and prosperity in English-speaking Britain. Lacking any papers, they have to sneak across the Channel, and at least 20 migrants have died trying since late June.

Officials say moving migrants out of the Calais slum will be a better solution for all, since many have been languishing in poverty and hopelessness after nearby borders have been sealed by increasing security.

Officials estimate the number of migrants who will be affected at 800 to 1,000, while humanitarian organizations say over 3,000 migrants live there.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FATALITIES

Mumbai creates no-selfie zones

Look around in any major Indian city, and you will find someone with an arm outstretched, mobile phone in hand, smiling widely and clicking away. Even Prime Minister Narendra Modi has embraced the medium, posting pictures online he's snapped with various world leaders.

But the pursuit of the most epic selfie can have lethal consequences.

India is home to the highest number of people who have died while taking photos of themselves, with 19 of the world's 49 recorded selfie-linked deaths since 2014, according to San Francisco-based data service provider Priceonomics.

The statistic may in part be due to India's sheer size, with 1.25 billion citizens and one of the world's fastest-growing smartphone markets. Alarmed by the trend, Mumbai has declared 16 no-selfie zones across the city, as authorities warn people against taking unnecessary risks. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A family takes a selfie. RAFIQ MAQBOOL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WEATHER

Severe storms hit Midwest

Tornadoes tore through towns as far north as Pennsylvania, heavy snow cancelled hundreds of flights in the Midwest and power outages left tens of thousands of residents from the Carolinas to New England in the dark as severe weather raked across a broad swath of the country for a third day. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Spend to spur growth: OECD

ECONOMY

Organization says Canada must invest in job creation

The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development has lent its voice to growing calls for more government spending in response to slowing global growth, a policy Canada's government is already planning to pursue in its first federal budget.

Amid persistently low oil prices and a slowing growth in China, the global economy urgently needs a stronger and more co-ordinated policy response to create jobs, the OECD said in its annual Going for Growth report.

Measures specific to Canada could include more support for research and development, better access to post-secondary education, an end to restrictions on foreign investment in telecom and broadcast companies, and privatizing Canada post, the agency said.

The OECD also called for greater government investment in infrastructure projects to create jobs and boost economic growth.

"Today's exceptionally low interest rates improve governments' fiscal space, affording a unique opportunity to make investments in infrastructure that will boost demand, stoke growth and actually improve public finances," OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría said in a statement released ahead of the two-day gathering.

The report was to be released Friday in Shanghai at the start of a G20 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors.

As an oil producing and exporting nation, Canada has been particularly hit hard by the dramatic plunge in the global price of crude from $100 US a barrel in June 2014 to $30 US.

The Canadian government under Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has pledged to boost infrastructure spending in its first federal budget, to be presented March 22, even though it will mean running a higher federal deficit. Both the OECD and the International Monetary Fund lowered their forecasts for global growth on persistently low prices for crude oil and concerns about weakness in China's economy.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau takes part in a plenary session at the G20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey, in November. An OECD report to be released Friday at the G20 meeting in Shanghai will lend its voice to growing calls for more government spending in response to slowing global growth. SEAN KILPATRICK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

ACTION PLAN

- Move toward more competitive electricity markets. Sell Canada Post to eliminate its monopoly.
- Reduce foreign investment barriers by lifting restrictions in telecommunications, airlines and broadcasting.
- Reform the tax system by increasing environmental and value-added taxes and reducing regressive income-tax expenditures to further lower corporate and personal tax rates.
- Enhance access to post-secondary education using income-contingent loans and needs-based grants.
- Improve research and development policies by lowering the refundable small-firm Scientific Research and Experimental Development (SR&ED) rate to raise grants and allocate them competitively.

BEER

Molson recreates 1908 ale

Molson Coors Canada says it's offering a limited release pale ale brewed from a 108-year-old recipe found deep in the company's archives.

Molson Coors says John H.R. Molson and Bros. 1908 Historic Pale Ale was created to celebrate its 230 years of brewing in Canada.

The company says its brewmasters "worked tirelessly" to authentically recreate the pale ale of 1908, right down to the most minute details.

"We sat down with maltsters, barley and hops breeders from across the globe to identify the correct ingredients to mix with Molson's ancient ale yeast derived from the same primordial strand John Molson used in the 1700s," said brewmaster Keith Armstrong.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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market minute

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HOUSING

Canadians feel the real-estate squeeze: Poll

Thandi Fletcher
Metro | Vancouver

Nearly half of people living in urban Canada say they're being squeezed by the cost of real estate, even in cities where prices pale in comparison to Vancouver and Toronto's sky-high markets, results of a new poll show.

Fifty-six per cent of Canadians, including those living in smaller real estate markets, say housing prices in their neighbourhoods fall outside of what's "reasonable," according to an Angus Reid Institute poll.

In Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Montreal and Halifax, no fewer than 45 per cent of respondents view prices as either "high" or "unreasonably high," the poll results show. According to January data from the Canadian Real Estate Association, the percentage of people who feel that way also roughly mirrors the actual average cost of a home in each city.

56%
Inclusive of smaller markets, **56 per cent** say housing prices fall outside what's "reasonable."

Earlier this month, the federal government introduced new mortgage rules that require homebuyers to put down larger down payments for properties over $500,000. The changes are intended to temper some of the country's heated real estate markets, especially targeting markets like Vancouver and Toronto where there are more properties worth $500,000 or more, according to the government.

While it remains to be seen if that actually happens, the poll results reveal that seven per cent of Canadians say the new rules would make them less likely to buy property this year.

The online survey of 5,867 Canadian adults who are members of the Angus Reid Forum was conducted from Feb. 2 to 10. The survey has a margin of error of 1.3 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Another survey of 1,513 Angus Reid Forum members was done Feb. 15 and has a margin of error of 2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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DECODED

Gravity does the wave

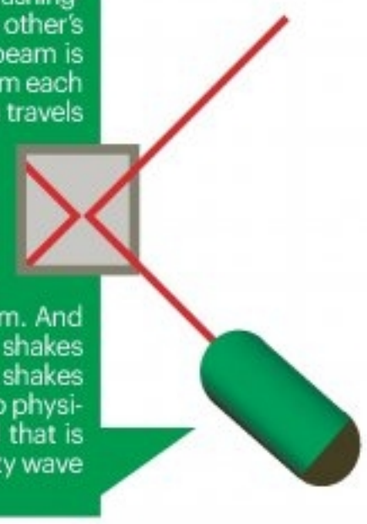
Nice job, Einstein. It's been a century since the super-smart physicist predicted the existence of **gravitational waves,** and three weeks since scientists announced they've directly detected them for the first time. It took us that long to stretch and warp our minds enough to understand how it is that space and time can be stretched and warped. Turns out this once-in-a-lifetime discovery is not as complicated as it seems — but way cooler: It's a potential new tool to observe more of "what's out there" than we've ever dreamed of seeing before.

1

WE NEVER DOUBTED YOU, AL
In 1916, Albert Einstein hypothesized that a massive explosion of energy — like, say, two black holes colliding 1.3 billion light-years away — would send out shock ripples called **gravitational waves,** jiggling the fabric of space and time. He was right. A little over a billion years later, those waves jiggled the Earth. Just the tiniest bit: by less than the width of an atom. And in September 2015, researchers at the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) measured that motion.

2

HOW DID THEY DO IT?
With ginormous lasers — plus a lot of other complex instruments and powerful computers — arranged identically in Louisiana and Washington State so the teams can check each other's work. Here's how it works: One laser beam is split into two beams travelling away from each other at a 90-degree angle. Each beam travels straight ahead for four kilometres, and then is bounced off a mirror. The two halves of the beam meet up again and merge into one. If a gravitational wave passes through, the mirrors wobble in a very specific way that scientists can see by analysing the recombined beam. And that's what happened. "First the signal shakes Louisiana, then 10 milliseconds later it shakes up Washington," University of Waterloo physicist Dr. Robert Mann told Metro. "And that is exactly how long it should take a gravity wave to go through the Earth."



3

ALL THE WORLD'S A STAGE — SORT OF
In ordinary life, it's helpful to think of time and space as constant and unchanging — as if, in the words of physicist Robert Mann, we all live and move around on a stage made of iron. But in reality, the stage is made of something like jelly. When a really massive object — like a black hole — steps onto the stage, the jelly sinks and bounces. Time can slow down or speed up. Space can expand or contract. And if a big enough shock to the system happens, a wave can ripple through the goo of space time — and that's what we call a gravitational wave.

4

CANADIAN CONNECTION
The LIGO collaboration included more than 1,000 scientists from 14 countries. Among them: Researchers at the University of Toronto, who performed some of the calculations to verify that LIGO's results were the real deal.

5

A NEW WINDOW INTO THE UNIVERSE
"The history of astronomy was based on light. We started out with visible light, and then we came up with technology where we could see radio waves, gamma rays, x-rays. Now what we're observing is not just another form of light. It's completely new. Anything that's dark in the universe **could** be revealed to us by gravitational waves. That's the promise this holds."

Dr. Eric Poisson,
Gravitational physicist
University of Guelph

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Citizen Scientist

Will talcum powder give me ovarian cancer?

Genna Buck

QUESTION
I read this week that Johnson & Johnson had to pay $72 million to the family of a woman who died of ovarian cancer caused by talcum powder. I'm in my 60s and have used talcum powder for half my life. I'm officially terrified!
Sincerely,
Sandy in Winnipeg

Dear Sandy,
The most important thing to know is that it's highly unlikely you'll get ovarian cancer, whether you use talc or not. About 1.3 per cent of women get ovarian cancer in their lifetimes. The greatest effect any study linking talc use to ovarian cancer showed around a 30 per cent increase in relative risk — meaning talc users would have something like a 1.69 per cent risk of getting ovarian cancer one day.

Johnson & Johnson lost its lawsuit because people in the corporation were told about the link and did not act on it.

But the evidence for the connection is mixed. Unlike smaller, older research papers on this issue, newer studies with larger samples mostly failed to find increased cancer rates among talc users — including women who put baby powder in a *diaphragm* (Ew). I suspect that the link is a hangover from the pre-1970s days when talcum contained asbestos, which does cause cancer.

Got a burning science question? Email scene@metronews.ca

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metro WEEKEND
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MOVIES MUSIC TELEVISION GOSSIP

STYLISH STARS ARE THEY CUT OUT FOR THESE LOOKS?

Metro's Oscar fashion panel suggests three gowns ahead of Sunday's show. Dress the dolls yourself by clipping them out! NICHOLE JANKOWSKI METRO

Brie Larson

@JILLIANVIEIRA

Jillian Vieira is the fashion editor at The Kit, Canada's 360-degree beauty & style leader.

We've already seen Brie favour sexy cut-outs and slinky silhouettes this awards season. As a serious best actress contender, I'd love for her to have a cool-girl princess moment in a dramatic, tulle-heavy Giambattista Valli.

@DANIESQUE

Known to favour feminine silhouettes, Brie could seriously rock a Delpozo dress. She's already proven that she can wear colour — and Delpozo's ability to pair nearly-fluorescent hues with neutrals and pastels is unmatched.

@MICHELLEADDISONSTYLE

If I was her stylist I'd try to get her in a Giambattisa Valli frock (think Rihanna at the 2015 Grammys). Since her fellow nominees are known to wear lighter colours, I'd like to see her stand out in a darker hue.

Lupita Nyong'o

@MICHELLEADDISONSTYLE

Michelle Addison is one of Vancouver's top stylists. Catch her fashion segments on CTV Morning Live.

Colour, colour and more colour. Nothing could stop this lady from being the centre of a room. She loves classic cuts and unfussy fashion. I would love to see her in yellow or gold. Oscar de la Renta or Calvin Klein would be good choices for her.

@JILLIANVIEIRA

There's very little Lupita can't pull off: flapper dresses, Grecian gowns and a one-piece column dress with cape have all earned her sartorial praise. A couture jumpsuit (à la Dior) would really solidify her Red Carpet Queen status.

@DANIESQUE

I'd love to see Lupita in Sid Neigum. While beautiful, her red carpet looks all follow similar silhouettes. Sid is known for dramatic, structured designs. Lupita could definitely pull off one of his runway-ready looks.

Priyanka Chopra

@DANIESQUE

Dani Roche is a designer, creative director, and the owner of Kastor & Pollux, a Toronto design and experiences agency.

Rodarte is known for their fairy-tale-like esthetic, innovative use of materials, and unconventional details — and one of their dreamy dresses would be a great fit for Priyanka, who typically opts for embellished gowns on the red carpet.

@MICHELLEADDISONSTYLE

While it's likely Priyanka will choose white to present, I'd like to see her in red or even dusty rose. She should stay away from black and metallics. I would love her to wear American/Indian Designer Naeem Khan or even Dior.

@JILLIANVIEIRA

Priyanka has the bold-colour-plus-body-hugging look mastered, which is why I'd like to see her graduate to new textures and fits. A draped, net-like dress (in an uber-flattering metallic finish like at Valentino) would do the trick.

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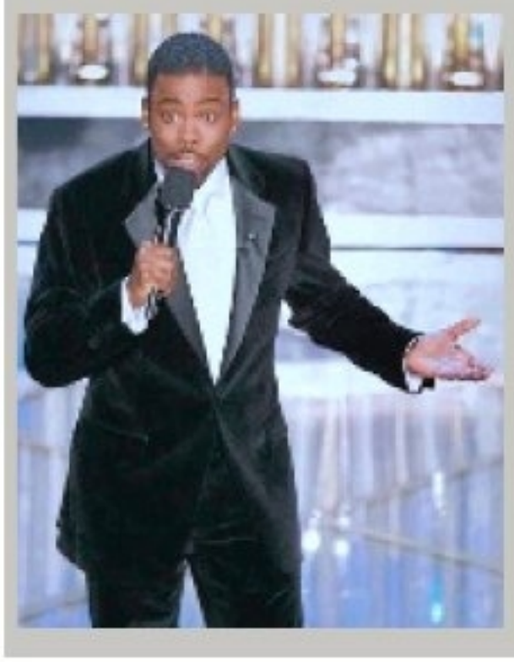
THE TV DINNER JESSICA ALLEN

The Oscars provide me with an excuse to make an elaborate meal out of snacks, fancy wine and frozen food

THE EVENT:
The 88th Academy Awards



THE MEAL:
Elaborate snacks

THE OSCARS

Right after a commercial break during the Academy Awards in 1987, the camera landed on host Chevy Chase. He was picking his nose. As a 12-year-old, this was the funniest thing I'd ever seen on television. I haven't missed an Oscar ceremony since.

I love them, although not everyone does. "The next morning, we all complain about how boring it was," New York Times film critic A.O. Scott recently wrote. "The morning after that we forget it all until the next year, when the show finds new ways to disappoint us." But Mr. Scott, the disappointments are half the fun! Out of Africa outperforming both Witness and The Color Purple; Chariots of Fire upstaging On Golden Pond; Forest Gump eclipsing Pulp Fiction and The Shawshank Redemption; Birdman over Boyhood; Crash over any other movie ever made! And what about the upsets? Crowd pleasers, like Rocky, beating All the President's Men, Network and Taxi Driver in 1976, and more recently in 2010 The King's Speech reigning over True Grit, Winter's Bone and The Social Network.

This year, however, disappointment lies more with the Academy itself. For the second year in a row they've failed to nominate a minority for best acting, which will undoubtedly provide pointed material for Chris Rock, who will have his second crack at hosting the awards on Sunday night.

The Academy's president promises to fix this by reviewing their recruitment efforts. Meanwhile, a far less meaningful remedy will be provided for those long acceptance speeches by way of a ticker at the bottom of the screen listing thank-yous, saving both time and embarrassment: No longer will an actor risk marital discord — Hillary Swank in 2000, Sean Penn in 2009 (both, coincidentally, divorced) — by forgetting to thank their spouse.

Who knows, maybe this year, the Academy will get it right: "Every once in a while — whether out of honesty, coincidence or a bizarre outbreak of good taste — those pasty old members make a choice that reflects both the state of the art and the reality of the culture," Scott said.

"Mostly, though, they manage to stage an elaborate pseudo-event and to bamboozle millions of people into paying attention. In a way, the scandal of this year's nominees confirms what too few of us in our profession are willing to admit: that the Oscars don't matter except insofar as they provide answers to future trivia questions."

Maybe — but they also provide me with an excuse to make an elaborate meal out of snacks, fancy wine and frozen food, which has been my Oscar spread for a decade now: I'm talking crostini topped with charcuterie, cheese, bruschetta-style tomatoes, guacamole, a shrimp ring, plus jalapeño poppers and mozzarella sticks, all washed down with a Nuits-Saint-Georges Burgundy.

There's not really a main course, although the calorie count easily surpasses 2,000. The point is that I can graze during the three-hour ceremony while I'm watching Twitter for fashion analysis, desperately looking for Jack Nicholson's return to the front row, tallying how many Oscars Spotlight picks up and trying to stay awake to see Leo finally get his Academy Award.

Jessica Allen is the digital correspondent on CTV's The Social.

FILM BRIEF

Gaga to sing her Oscar-nominated song at show

Lady Gaga, a survivor of sexual assault, says performing Til It Happens to You — her song about sexual abuse on campuses — at Sunday's Academy Awards will feel liberating and emancipating.

"It's something in my life that's always really kind of defined me up until this point. In a strange way I feel like it won't define me anymore after I sing it on TV at the Oscars, if I can let it go maybe," Gaga said in a recent interview with The Associated Press.

Gaga, 29, was sexually assaulted when she was 19. Til It Happens to You, written with Diane Warren and a nominee for best original song, appears in The Hunting Ground, a documentary about sexual assault on college campuses that was directed by Kirby Dick.

The pop star said earning her first Oscar nomination for a song about a serious and heavy topic "makes it extra-special."

"They really and truly nominated the issue of sexual assault on campuses. ... People all over the world that have suffered with any kind of pain or trauma, (if) they are having trouble being brave, this song is for them," she said.

Gaga also said she's honoured to be nominated with Warren, who earned her eighth Oscar nomination with "Til It Happens to You." Warren has never won the prize. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Lady Gaga. INVISION/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Are the Oscars still relevant?

THE OSCARS

#OscarsSoWhite reflects Academy Awards' cultural disconnect

Richard Crouse
For Metro Canada

A friend is boycotting the Academy Awards because his favourite film of 2015, Star Wars: The Force Awakens, didn't make the Oscar's Best Picture list.

The awards, he says, aren't relevant because they ignore genre movies and in this particular case, have snubbed the most financially successful film of the year. In fact, the old canard that the Academy doesn't honour genre movies with Best Picture nods has been shot down this year with nominations for The Martian and Mad Max: Fury Road.

The Oscar folks also gave The Force Awakens five nominations and in recent years Inception, Avatar, District 9, Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King and Django Unchained have all earned top nods with Avatar and LOTR taking home the gold.

Genre movies do just fine with the Academy. No need for C-3PO to cry little metal tears. To the Academy's credit, not recognizing the year's box office behemoth while giving Room, a modestly grossing movie, Best Picture, Actress, Directing and Adapted Screenplay nods, actually suggests the Academy will not be wowed by wheelbarrows of cash.

Perhaps the truth is that the Oscars, and awards shows in general, are only as relevant as you want them to be. Are they as important as the Republican debates? It's all just show biz, so maybe. Ultimately, unless you're an actor, a director or a shareholder in a nominated film the Oscars are probably not extremely significant to your life. I pay attention to them as a function of my job, and I enjoy them, but this year I'm on board with my friend but for different reasons.

I'm disappointed in Oscar's failure to acknowledge diversity. For the second year in a row all 20 acting nominations went to white actors. To be clear I'm not implying the Academy is overtly racist. There are too many voters for there to be a conspiracy to keep actors of colour out of the headline categories. Have you ever gone to a restaurant with more than 10 people and tried to get everyone to agree on an appetizer for the table? It's nearly impossible. Now imagine trying to arrange collusion between 6,000 members of the Academy. Totally hopeless.

So if it's not a conspiracy why were stellar performances from Creed's Michael B. Jordan, The Hateful Eight's Samuel L. Jackson, Sicario's Benicio Del Toro, Beasts of No Nation's Idris Elba or any of Straight Outta Compton's top line cast not nominated? I think it's a combination of studio decision makers, who tend to be white, male and older coupled with the same demographic of voters at the Academy.

It's a systemic issue being addressed by Academy president Cheryl Boone Isaacs' effort to mould the Academy's membership to be more in line with the population.

Until the Oscars represent the full width and breadth of the best in Hollywood, regardless of race or gender, they will continue to slide toward irrelevancy. My guess is that the most interesting part of this year's ceremony won't be who wins Best Actor but host Chris Rock's opening monologue, which, if the movie gods prevail, will address the situation in no uncertain terms. It's a speech I'm predicting will be just as entertaining and provocative as any of the nominees, Star Wars: The Force Awakens included.

ACADEMY AWARDS AS LIGHTNING ROD

Outspoken at the Oscars

This year the #OscarsSoWhite movement made the Academy Awards a lightening rod for debate but the diversity issue is only the latest Oscars controversy.

1 Marlon Brando
In 1973 Marlon Brando made headlines when he sent Sacheen Littlefeather to refuse the Best Actor statue for his work in The Godfather. In a prepared statement she said Brando declined the award because of "the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry and on television and in movie reruns." The speech was met with boos and later Clint Eastwood said, "I don't know if I should present this award on behalf of all the cowboys shot in John Ford westerns over the years," as he presented the Best Picture award.

2 Vanessa Redgrave
Five years later as the Jewish Defense League burned effigies of pro-Palestinian activist Vanessa Redgrave outside the Dorothy Chandler Pavillion, the Julia actress accepted the Best Actress award inside. Drawing gasps from the audience she said she "refused to be intimidated by the threats of a small bunch of Zionist hoodlums." Later screenwriter Paddy Chayefsky said, "I'm sick and tired of people exploiting the Academy Awards for the propagation of their own personal propaganda," to rapturous applause.

3 Sarandon and Robbins
Chayefsky's scolding didn't seem to stick as actors continued to use the Oscar stage as a platform. In 1993 a trifecta of actors made the ceremony the most political ever. Best Film Editing presenters Susan Sarandon and Tim Robbins criticized the government for incarcerating 266 HIV virus-infected Haitians in Guantanamo Bay while Richard Gere commented on human rights abuses in China. Show producer Gil Cates was outraged. "Does anyone care about Richard Gere's comments about China?" he said. "It's arrogant."

HOLLYWOOD SUITE SPONSORED CONTENT

5 REASONS TO WATCH THE FILM INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARDS

Can't get enough of Hollywood's award season? The Film Independent Spirit Awards is just the ticket. The star-studded annual event, now in its 31st year, honours the best achievements in independent film. The ceremony is held in a tent on Santa Monica Beach, with a dollop of Oscar pageantry and a full helping of Golden Globe irreverence. It's a chance to see the industry's top talent chill out, pat each other on the back, and potentially say something they'll regret for a full year. Here are 5 other reasons to tune in:

1. The hosts. What do Kristen Bell, Steve Coogan, John Waters and Seth Rogan have in common? They've all hosted the Spirit Awards. This year, the show boasts Kate McKinnon and Kumail Nanjiani. McKinnon is a current Saturday Night Live cast member, famous for her dead-on impressions (including Justin Bieber!). Her co-host, Nanjiani, is an accomplished stand-up with a growing resume of feature films, including Sex Tape and Hot Tub Time Machine 2.

2. Behind the scenes bits. Last year, Fred Armisen's hysterical parody of Birdman saw him bob frantically through the show's backstage on a single-take adventure that led him to find actor Miles Teller pounding a live drum kit — a reference to Teller's Spirit-nominated film Whiplash.

3. Sauciness in the spotlight. Nothing says "unceremonious" like the promotional-size bottles of booze on every table at this gala dinner. This show is the setting for such moments as Michael Moore famously condemning George W. Bush. It's the setting for Jared Leto, accepting the award for Best Supporting Male for Dallas Buyers Club, who thanked everyone from Pink Floyd to the inventor of the zipper.

4. The unexpected takes centre stage. Anything can happen. Like the time director Michel Hazanavicius arrived with a full police escort from LAX just in time to receive his Best Director award for The Artist.

5. A real connection to film. Sure, it's cool to see everyone from Daniel Radcliffe and Bradley Cooper to Jane Fonda and Bruce Willis breaking bread and chugging drinks together. But it's even cooler to know why they're there. The show helps filmmakers make their movies, it builds an audience for their projects and helps diversify the film industry.

Watch the exclusive Canadian broadcast of the Film Independent Spirit Awards live on Hollywood Suite, Saturday, Feb. 27 at 5 p.m. ET.

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Finding humour in the darkness

Benicio Del Toro plays a misfit aid worker working in the Balkans in the 1990s. CONTRIBUTED

A PERFECT DAY

Del Toro tackles tricky role as an aid worker

The last time we saw Benicio Del Toro on screen he was starring in Sicario as a mercenary who collected a handsome paycheque while quenching his thirst for revenge against drug cartel leaders.

He was vicious and malicious, a supreme badass doing the right thing for the completely wrong reason.

That movie's dark and gritty examination of the drug-fuelled Mexico-U.S. border war stands in stark contrast to his new movie, the optimistically titled A Perfect Day. "I do believe there is hope in A Perfect Day," he says. "I agree with you that Sicario is hopeless but in this one there is hope. I was finishing A Perfect Day when I went into Sicario. Perhaps that's one of the reasons Sicario was interesting, because it was the dark side of the coin."

Set in 1990s Balkans, Del Toro plays Mambrú, a misfit aid worker whose team (played by Tim Robbins and Olga Kurylenko among others) begin their day in the former Yugoslavia trying to remove a bloated corpse dumped in a well to contaminate the water.

The task is complicated by United Nations bureaucracy and the lack of a strong enough rope forcing the crew to navigate not only landmine-ridden roads but their own complicated relationships in search of a solution.

Director Fernando León de Aranoa calls Del Toro the centerpiece of the film, adding, "Working with him means working with a creative partner."

"There are some ideas that can come from anywhere that are golden," Del Toro says on improvising on set.

"I would like to say that I wish I could recognize good ideas when they are out there whether they come from another actor or they come from myself. If there is a good idea I am game to explore."

Del Toro, who is currently filming Star Wars: Episode VIII, says the script appealed to him because, it was about, "people trying to do good and just how complicated it can get, but with elements of humour.... It was like a riddle to solve," he says.

"Can the movie balance these two things? I think it does."

One point of reference was Robert Altman's black comedy M*A*S*H about medical personnel stationed at a Mobile Army Surgical Hospital during the Korean War.

The actor says he discussed the 1970 movie, "with the director and Tim Robbins a little bit."

More importantly, he met with his character's real-life counterparts.

"I had met some aid workers and I will tell you, they all have a good sense of humour.

"They tell you some dark stories but they do have a sense of humour. It's a way of dealing with the darkness of their experiences and the pain.

RICHARD CROUSE/FOR METRO

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Eddie (Taron Egerton), left, and his coach Bronson Peary (Hugh Jackman) rejoice in Eddie's triumph in Eddie the Eagle. CONTRIBUTED

Biopic champions last-place Olympian

EDDIE THE EAGLE

Tale of kitschy competitor a feel-good sports classic

Steve Gow
For Metro Canada

Eddie Edwards is a textbook example of a real-life folk hero. Just don't call the infamous ski jumper an underdog.

"People say it's an underdog story," explained filmmaker Dexter Fletcher while discussing his new Olympian biopic Eddie the Eagle recently. "But it's only an underdog story if he went I'm going to go win gold and did it. Eddie just wanted to get there."

Those who remember Eddie the Eagle's rock star rise during the 1988 Olympics in Calgary may recall how the bespectacled Brit won over spectators with a spirited, albeit below-average pair of last-place jumps. But of course, it wasn't his athleticism that inspired most fans.

"I've met people who saw him jump and they said 'we'd always go and watch him because you never knew what was going to happen'," said the 50-year-old actor-turned-director. "He was about getting to be an Olympian and that reaction that you got from the crowd at Calgary was just about the natural exuberance of 'wow, I've achieved something I've always wanted to do!'"

Coincidentally, another quartet of kitschy competitors not only competed in the same Olympics, but also had a biopic produced about them. Although Fletcher hadn't planned on scouting other movies for motivation ahead of production, he does concede he caught Cool Runnings, the 1993 comedy about an unlikely bobsled team from Jamaica.

"I get why it works and I see where the similarities are and that's fine but our movie had to find our own identity, its own tone," said Fletcher. "Of course, that's what separates all these movies from the next."

After 40 years in showbiz, Fletcher should know a thing or two about making movies. A longtime London thespian that's appeared in everything from The Elephant Man to HBO's Band of Brothers, Fletcher may now enjoy extending his expertise behind the camera, but directing only came to him accidentally after shopping his first screenplay.

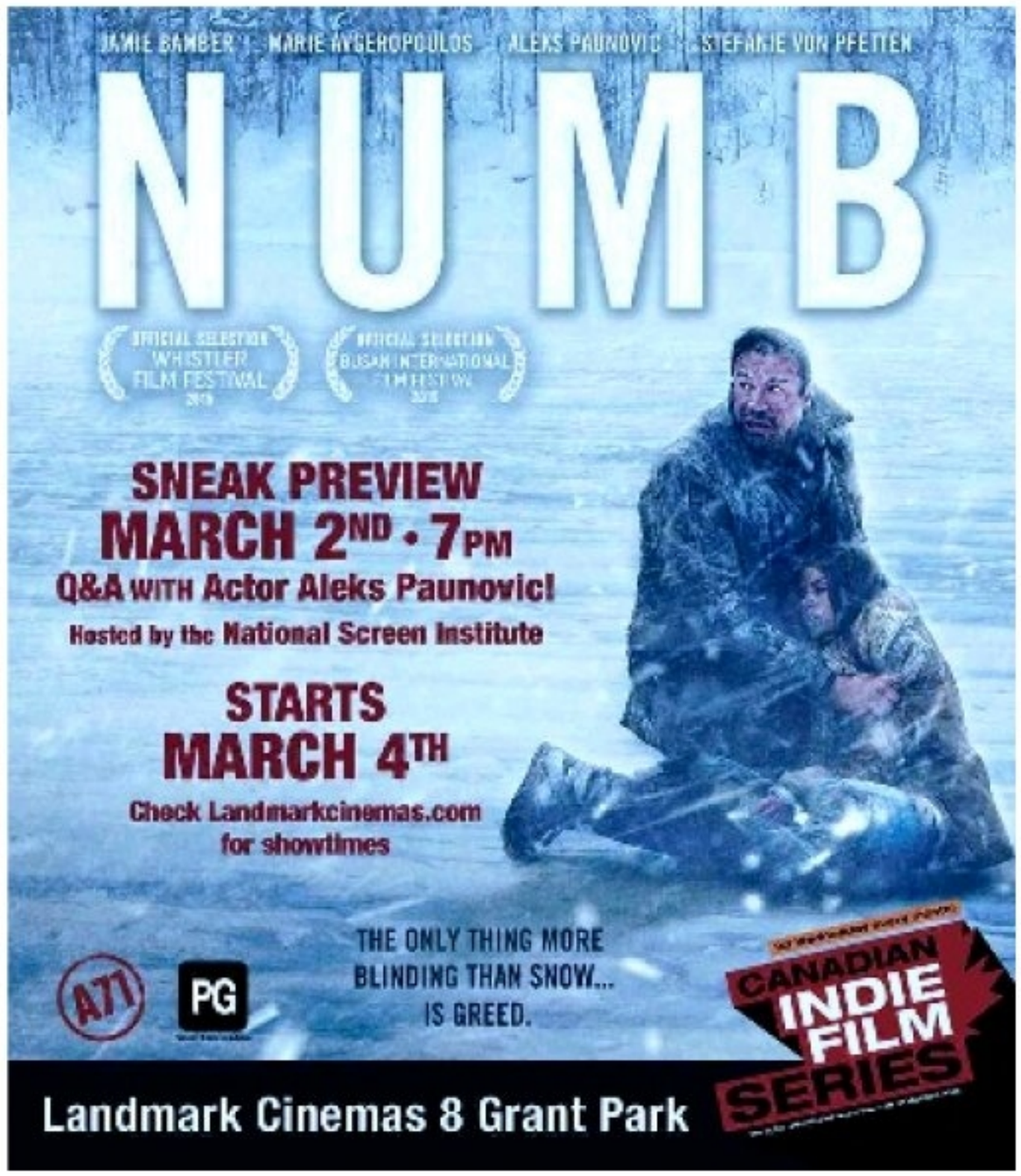
"I took it to some producers who just assumed that I wanted to direct it so I never told them any different," laughed Fletcher recalling his acclaimed 2011 directorial debut Wild Bill. "The film turned out well (so) I've been riding that wave ever since."

OLYMPIC FLICKS

Chariots of Fire (1981) Perhaps more famous for its overbearing score by Vangelis, this Oscar-winning film tells the true story of two religiously-disparate runners competing to race at the 1924 Olympics in Paris.

Miracle (2004) Kurt Russell sports a bad haircut and loud checkered pants to play real-life coach Herb Brooks who led a longshot American hockey team to gold at the Lake Placid Olympics in 1980.

Cool Runnings (1993) Before finding gold with thrillers like National Treasure, filmmaker Jon Turteltaub fictionalized a family feature about the Jamaican squad that went from sitting on sunny Caribbean beaches to sliding down a snowy Olympic bobsled track in Calgary. STEVE GOW/FOR METRO



metro TRAVEL
Your essential daily news

Jerusalem Hotel to reward couples who conceive on leap day in one of their rooms

5 BEST SPOTS FOR SCUBA DIVING IN CUBA

Over the past 25 years, 80 per cent of the Caribbean's reefs have either died or have severely degraded. However, the lack of economic development and restrictions placed on offshore activities in Cuba, along with a smattering of environmental policies, have saved the coral reefs around the island. Here's five of the best spots. **TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE**

1 Jardines de la Reina

The spectacular Jardines de la Reina is the premier dive destination for the Caribbean. It's enclosed in a marine protected area that's 170 kilometres long and 10 kms wide, and it has the healthiest coral reef ecosystem in the Caribbean. Only 500 scuba divers per year are permitted to dive in this undersea paradise. If you can only go on one dive trip in the Caribbean, this is it.

2 Cayo Largo

If you don't want to put any effort in getting to your dive vacation, Cayo Largo is a great option, as there are direct flights from Canada. You will land close to your hotel and the marina. The dive charters run efficiently, and it's a short sail to the dive sites along the nearby barrier reefs.

PHOTOS JOSEPH FREY/FOR TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE: CORAL AND GROUPER PHOTOS ISTOCK

3 Bay of Pigs

If you're fascinated by Cold War history and wall diving that drops 450 metres into the abyss, then the Bay of Pigs is your place. The best dive sites are only a two-minute swim from shore, and they're located between the towns of Playa Larga and Playa Giron. Home to 17 varieties of flat coral, both hard and soft, the deeper you dive, the wider the coral get.

4 Isle of Youth

Punta Frances Marine National Park is tucked away on the remote southwestern tip of the Isle of Youth and formed around a peninsula with protected, white, sun-drenched sandy beaches. The reefs here are in good shape and the fish populations diverse.

5 Trinidad de Cuba

Southwest of Trinidad de Cuba, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, along a starkly beautiful stretch of coastline, there is an area of wall diving with colourful coral and beautiful fish. The walls are punctuated with meandering canyons in parts, some of which turn into beautiful tunnels with coral-overhang where sharks can be seen.

PROTECTION

Tourists welcome here — sort of

News that Italy's Cinque Terre is set to implement a ticketing system that limits the number of tourists who visit the area is the latest reminder of the privileges and pitfalls that have come with increasingly accessible airfares and mass tourism.

Cinque Terre, located in the Liguria region of Italy, is the latest tourist destination that has been forced to put a cap on tourists in a bid to preserve the integrity of its natural surroundings in the wake of explosive visitor numbers over the last few years.

Last week, a spokesman for the national park and UNESCO World Heritage Site announced that as of this summer, visitors will have to buy an advance ticket online in order to gain access to the cliffside trails which connect the five fishing villages. Here are a few other destinations that have either implemented tourist caps or are considering it.

Machu Picchu

In a bid to preserve and protect Peru's fabled and ancient, mountaintop ruins, the country has developed a new reconceptualization project that imposes time limits as a means to control crowd flow and requires visitors to hire an official guide for the trail.

Antarctica

To protect one of the few, final frontiers unspoiled by human activity and tourism, The Antarctic Treaty restricts ships with more than 500 passengers from landing sites.

Galapagos Islands

Described as a "living museum and showcase of evolution," the collection of 19 islands which make up the Galapagos Islands groaned under the pressure of unsustainable tourism numbers over the years, putting it on the United Nations' list of endangered heritage sites. Today, a conservation program has successfully helped it make a solid recovery. To visit, tourists must now be accompanied by a licensed Galapagos National Park Guide and abide by strict rules when visiting the area. Camping is also allowed in only a handful of authorized areas, and requires a permit from park officials. AFP

Picturesque Cinque Terre is joining places like Antarctica and the Galapagos Islands in looking to limit the number of tourists it takes. ISTOCK

TRAVEL NOTES NEW YORK-PARIS, B.C. AND THE GREAT NORTH

Norwegian to fly New York to Paris nonstop with fares from $175 U.S.

The Norway-based budget airline will start flying a nonstop Paris-New York route with introductory fares starting at $175 US from July 29. Norwegian is also opening Paris-U.S. routes connecting the French capital with Los Angeles and Fort Lauderdale. Although Norwegian is the first carrier to offer such attractive fares between Paris and New York, it isn't the first airline to drive down prices on the popular route. AFP

Norwegian will start flying a New York-Paris route with fares from $175 U.S. HANDOUT

International tourism to B.C. increasing, province says

The British Columbia government says the number of international visitors to the province is increasing and France is in the top spot on a list of seven countries and regions. Almost 360,000 more international visitors came to the province in 2015, with the total number approaching five million. The ministry is crediting its marketing strategy, along with the province's aboriginal tourism sector and more direct flights. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A deer spotted on Grouse mountain in Vancouver. ISTOCK

Quebec to spend $36 million on northern wilderness park

The Quebec government says it will spend $36 million to develop Parc national d'Opemican, a 252-square-kilometre tract of lakes, rivers and old pine forests in the Abitibi-Temiscamingue region along the Ontario border. The work, expected to be completed in about three years, will include the creation of a main park hub, Pointe-Opemican, on Lac Temiscamingue.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Parc national d'Opemican is getting an upgrade. ISTOCK

The cocktail capital of Canada?

BOOZE

Vancouver raises the bar as a libation destination

Bartender Trevor Kallies prepares a smoked boulevardier cocktail. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

On a rainy evening inside an illuminated geodesic dome that adds sparkle to Vancouver's skyline, queues of gussied-up socialites are forming at 25 beverage stations manned by award-winning bartenders.

Patrons of the Science World fundraiser are sipping Mai Tai vapour through straws at one station and shooting glow-in-the-dark gin and tonics at another.

"That's the thing about Vancouver — the culture demands more from bartenders," says Tarquin Melnyk, who runs the bar for Bambudda restaurant.

The inaugural Science of Cocktails charity, which ran in early February with proceeds providing underfunded schools free access to the landmark science centre, is a testament to Vancouver's spirited drinking scene. Organizers easily served up praise that Vancouver may very well be the cocktail capital of Canada.

Jennifer Ingham, vice-president of development with Science World believes the city's reputation for lame and cold nightlife is evaporating: "I think the city is becoming less 'no fun.'" The West Coast metropolis already boasts a renowned panoply of bars and restaurants clustered in distinct neighbourhoods from the swish Gastown to hipster Main Street.

But the city's cocktail resurgence proper started in the mid-2000s, as a small community keen to move beyond pulling pints and slinging highballs began crystallizing, said Trevor Kallies, president of the Canadian Professional Bartenders Association.

"No one asks me what I'm going to do when I grow up anymore. They know I'm still a bartender, they know I love what I do and they know it's working. People are getting it."
THE CANADIAN PRESS

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metro SPORTS

Bahrain's Sheikh Salman is considered the favourite amongst five candidates on the ballot for Friday's election for the FIFA presidency

CFL

Drug violators to face tougher entry

The CFL is making it harder for players who violate anti-doping regulations to enter the league.

The CFL and the CFL Players' Association say they have agreed to implement stricter rules for offending players to be drafted or sign contracts.

A player violating the Canadian Anti-Doping Program or testing positive for a substance banned by the CFL up to 12 months before being draft eligible will be forced to defer his draft status for one year.

A player going through the draft, regardless of whether he's selected or not, who subsequently violates the anti-doping rules will be ineligible to sign a CFL deal for one calendar year from the date of the positive test.

5

Last year five players who attended the CFL combine tested positive for banned substances. Three were drafted with linebacker Jonathan Langa appearing in 16 games with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats.

A player ineligible for the draft, from either the Canadian junior football ranks or an international player from another football league or sport, who violates the rules will be unable to sign a CFL contract for one year from the date of the violation.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

TOURNAMENT OF HEARTS

Alberta clinches top-two seeding

Alberta's Chelsea Carey not only clinched a playoff berth at the Canadian women's curling championship Thursday, she also earned a spot in the playoff game between the top two seeds.

The host province downed Nova Scotia's Jill Brothers 8-2 to get to a record of 8-2. With one game remaining in the preliminary round, Carey's team from Calgary was guaranteed a top-two finish.

Northern Ontario's Krista McCarville was still in the playoff hunt at 6-3 following a 10-3 victory over B.C.'s Karla Thompson. Defending champion Jennifer Jones was 6-2 and Manitoba's Kerri Einarson 5-3 with three games remaining in the round robin. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Manitoba's Kerri Einarson was in position to earn one of the four playoff positions. Go to metronews.ca for more coverage. THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Garcia in a tie for the lead at the Honda Classic

Sergio Garcia made an eagle, avoided an alligator and wound up in a share of the lead Thursday in the Honda Classic.

Garcia holed out with an 8-iron for eagle on the second hole and finished with a birdie for a 5-under 65. Michael Thompson, who won the Honda Classic in 2013, also made birdie on 18 for a 65. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Teenage rookie leads United into Europa League's last 16

Teenager Marcus Rashford scored two of Manchester United's four second-half goals in his professional debut in a 5-1 win over FC Midtjylland, sparing the English giant an embarrassing exit from the Europa League on Thursday.

United won 6-3 on aggregate to reach the last 16. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Andrew Ladd was the Jets' captain since the team moved from Atlanta for the 2011-12 season. TREVOR HAGAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Ladd dealt to Chicago

NHL

Jets land Dano, first-round pick in trade

Winnipeg Jets captain Andrew Ladd was traded to the Chicago Blackhawks on Thursday in a multi-player deal.

Forward Matt Fraser and defenceman Jay Harrison are also being sent to Chicago. Both will report to the American Hockey League's Rockford IceHogs.

Winnipeg gets forward Marko Dano, the Blackhawks' first-round pick in the 2016 NHL draft and a conditional pick in 2018.

Ladd, an unrestricted free agent after this season, was the Jets captain since they moved from Atlanta for the 2011-12 season.

He immediately upgrades the reigning Stanley Cup champion Blackhawks, filling a need on the left wing of their already-potent top-six forward group.

He seems likely to join Jonathan Toews on a Chicago top unit that will also likely include Marian Hossa, sidelined at the moment by injury.

The 30-year-old Ladd is also a former Blackhawk, playing there for two-plus seasons while winning a Cup with the club in 2010. Ladd also captured the Cup with the Carolina Hurricanes in 2006.

Ladd has 17 goals and 17 assists in 59 games for Winnipeg this season, with a total of 202 goals and 252 assists in 750 career NHL games across 11 seasons with Carolina (2005-08), Chicago (2008-10), Atlanta (2010-11) and Winnipeg (2011-16).

The Jets, meanwhile, land a nice haul for their future. A key piece of Chicago's return in a summer trade with Columbus that made Brandon Saad a member of the Blue Jackets, Dano had 23 points in 34 AHL games with Rockford this season. THE CANADIAN PRESS

SEASON OVER

Jets forward Bryan Little will miss the rest of the season due to a back injury. Head coach Paul Maurice confirmed Thursday that Little, who has 42 points this season, has a vertebral compression fracture.

MLB

'I wouldn't want to pitch against us'

Josh Donaldson isn't worried about the Toronto Blue Jays' offensive potential this upcoming season.

He just feels sorry for opposing pitchers.

"The fact of the matter is, you have me, then you have Jose Bautista, who hit 40 homers last year ... then Edwin Encarnacion, who's hit over 40, then Russell Martin ... (Chris) Colabello, (Justin) Smoak ... Tulo (Troy Tulowitzki) — I mean, Jesus, it just keeps going," Donaldson said.

"I wouldn't want to pitch against us. There were a lot of guys last year that we faced who were defeated before they even threw the first pitch.

And those guys made their exit pretty quick."

Donaldson, the reigning MVP of the American League, reported to Blue Jays camp Thursday after a jam-packed off-season.

He played with PGA Tour star Jason Dufner in the Pebble Beach Pro Am, took a photo of himself with Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton at an Auburn football game (both are Tigers alumni), and even landed a speaking role on an episode of the History Channel's Canadian-Irish drama series Vikings.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

$28M

Donaldson and the Jays avoided arbitration this off-season, signing a two-year contract worth $28.65 million US.

Josh Donaldson crushed 41 home runs last season. RICK MADONIK/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

RECIPE Eggs, Asparagus & Couscous

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This is almost not a recipe at all, which come Friday night is what we all need, right? Tell yourself you're experimenting with one of those trendy grain bowls. Or just sit down and enjoy a speedy dinner.

Ready in
Prep time: 5 minutes
Total time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

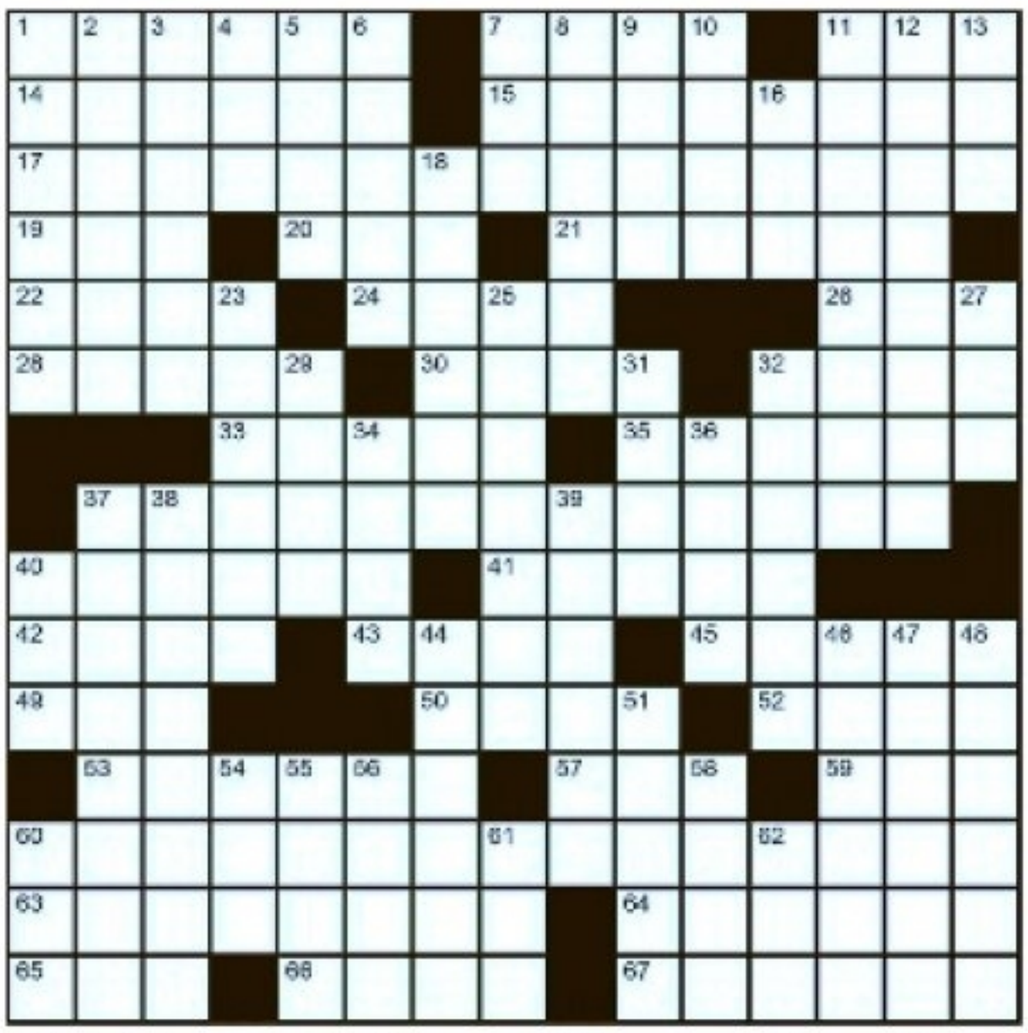
Ingredients
- 1 cup couscous
- 16 asparagus spears
- 4 eggs (very fresh poach best)
- 2 tsp vinegar
- Parsley or chives, chopped

Directions
1. Get three pots of water boiling. One with just a bit of water for the asparagus, a very shallow pan for the eggs and 2 cups of salted water in a pot for the couscous.
2. Add couscous to boiling water and stir. It will take up a lot of water right away. After a couple minutes, turn off heat and put the lid on the pot. Leave couscous aside to absorb remaining water.
3. Now, poach your eggs. Add vinegar to boiling water. Crack eggs into ramekins. Tip the eggs into the simmering water. Turn off heat, cover the pan and leave alone for 5 minutes.
4. In your third pot, put trimmed asparagus in boiling water until they're tender — about 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and rinse in cool water to stop them from cooking.
5. Spoon couscous onto your plate, lay down four spears of asparagus then scoop eggs out of the water with a slotted spoon and lay on top. Garnish with chives and salt and pepper.

FOR MORE MEAL IDEAS, VISIT SWEETPOTATOCHRONICLES.COM

CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. "Mutual of _ Wild Kingdom"
7. Money __ object
11. EMT's skill
14. Backstreet Boys: "All I __ Give"
15. Tofu: 2 wds.
17. Rapunzel and Rumpelstiltskin: 2 wds.
19. Profession, puny-ly
20. Down
21. Magistrates' mallets
22. Mr. LaBeouf
24. Sprint
26. Mag. edition
28. Actress Katherine
30. Volkswagen Karmann _
32. Person of the Arctic
33. "_ Was a Lady" (1945)
35. As per #37-Down, Canadian diamond producer which found the world's second-largest gem quality diamond in November of 2015
37. Extra extras are needed on a movie set for one: 3 wds.
40. Piano piece
41. English slammers
42. Web address starter
43. "House" role, Dr. Chris _
45. French operas composer, Daniel _ (b.1782 - d.1871)
49. "The 18th letter is known _ '_'."
50. Frankenfoods ingredients, commonly
52. Cornmeal bread
53. Outfitted one
57. Craze
59. Post-op locale
60. Though David Weiser designed it in 1964, it only became one of Canada's official symbols in 2011: 3 wds.
63. Cold sufferer
64. 'B.' of Samuel F.B. Morse
65. Meander
66. Pericles, Prince of _
67. Replied positively

DOWN
1. "Goodness me.": 2 wds.
2. Montreal 'market'
3. Swedish DJ/producer
4. Tailor's trimmee
5. 24-hr. bankers
6. To date: 2 wds.
7. There: Latin
8. Composer Mr. Rachmaninoff
9. Quebec water brand
10. A-ha's "The Sun Always Shines __ _-_"
11. The world's largest gem quality diamond, found in South Africa in 1905
12. Stress causer
13. Shortened streets
16. Flight simulators co.
18. Leisurely music tempo
23. Multi-married-man/Newest-wife separator: 2 wds.
25. Enjoy a stick of Juicy Fruit: 2 wds.
27. Music style
29. Milky tip to 'ose'
31. Plus
32. Becomes frozen: 2 wds.
34. "Darn it!"
36. Calif. campus
37. Country in Africa where #35-Across' Karowe Mine is located
38. Fearless
39. Lightly remove a stain: 2 wds.
40. _ Na Na
44. Concurring person
46. Boxes: French
47. Box in
48. Met with former classmates
51. Didn't help: 2 wds.
54. Planet Melmac alien
55. Looted, archaically
56. For Better or For Worse mom
58. Challenge
60. Lettered food additive
61. 'Is', plurally
62. CV

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
You want to feel that you're doing something useful with your life and with Uranus strong in your sign it's up to you to make that happen. Don't do it alone though, there are others who share your ideals.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Do something that gets you noticed and marks you both as a free thinker and person of action. Don't wait for opportunities to come to you, get out there and grab them yourself.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If you get the chance to travel today you must take it, even if it means breaking other plans. People you meet while on the move will bring you luck — and maybe love too!

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You will have to make a number of quick decisions today. Trust your instincts and they are more likely to be smart decisions. Don't worry if some people make fun of your ideas.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
It may be frustrating that others are putting obstacles in your path but there is no point making a fuss. Just carry on as you are and believe that you will reach your goal when the time is right — and you will.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You could push yourself too hard today and over the weekend and put your wellbeing at risk. A simple rule of thumb: make sure you stay fit and healthy — don't go to extremes.

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
There is virtually nothing you cannot do but that does not mean you are obliged to do everything. Identify the two or three aims, then focus on them to the exclusion of everything else. Success will surely follow.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
If you rise to the challenges that face you today you'll find ways to overcome. Family ties will work in your favour, so let loved ones know what you need.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Come and go as you please today and over the weekend. Once you get over the fear that others might disapprove of your actions there is nothing that can hold you back.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
It feels as if something important is leaving your life but don't worry because something better will replace it. Remember that you deserve the best — because then you will get it.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The Sun left your birth sign a week ago but that does not mean your luck has changed. On the contrary, where money matters are concerned everything seems in order. Put some cash aside for a rainy day.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Your mind is being overwhelmed by so senseless chatter. Find a quiet place where you can be on your own, a sacred spot where you can get your thoughts together.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

4			5	2		6	1	
	3							
		1					5	
		3	1					
	6	9				3	8	
					7	2		
	5					4		
							2	
	2	6		3	9			5

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YESTERDAY'S ANSWERS

Your daily crossword and Sudoku answers from the play page.

for more fun and games go to metronews.ca/games

4	8	7	1	6	2	5	3	9
3	9	1	4	7	5	8	6	2
5	2	6	9	3	8	4	1	7
7	5	3	6	8	9	1	2	4
9	6	2	7	4	1	3	5	8
1	4	8	5	2	3	7	9	6
8	1	4	3	9	6	2	7	5
2	3	9	8	5	7	6	4	1
6	7	5	2	1	4	9	8	3

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$160 BI-WEEKLY*

SAVE OVER $1,750 ON THIS ESCAPE!

2015 FORD FOCUS SE STK# R15698

WAS: $22,664
SALE PRICE: $17,549
Offer includes freight and air tax but excludes PST & GST
$105 BI-WEEKLY*

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2016 FORD FUSION STK# R16329

SALE PRICE: $23,499
Offer includes freight and air tax but excludes PST & GST
$135 BI-WEEKLY*
0% FINANCING*

SAVE OVER $2,000 ON THIS FUSION!

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WAS: $46,249
SALE PRICE: $37,989
Offer includes freight and air tax but excludes PST & GST
$232 BI-WEEKLY*
0.99% FINANCING*

SAVE OVER $7,750 ON THIS F-150!

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WAS: $40,649
SALE PRICE: $38,395
Offer includes freight and air tax but excludes PST & GST
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0% FINANCING*

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